



# Michigan

## 2010 Conservation Report | Great Lakes / Atlantic Regional Office

### DUCKS UNLIMITED RECEIVES \$989,000 NAWCA GRANT FOR THE SOUTHEAST LAKE MICHIGAN WATERSHED

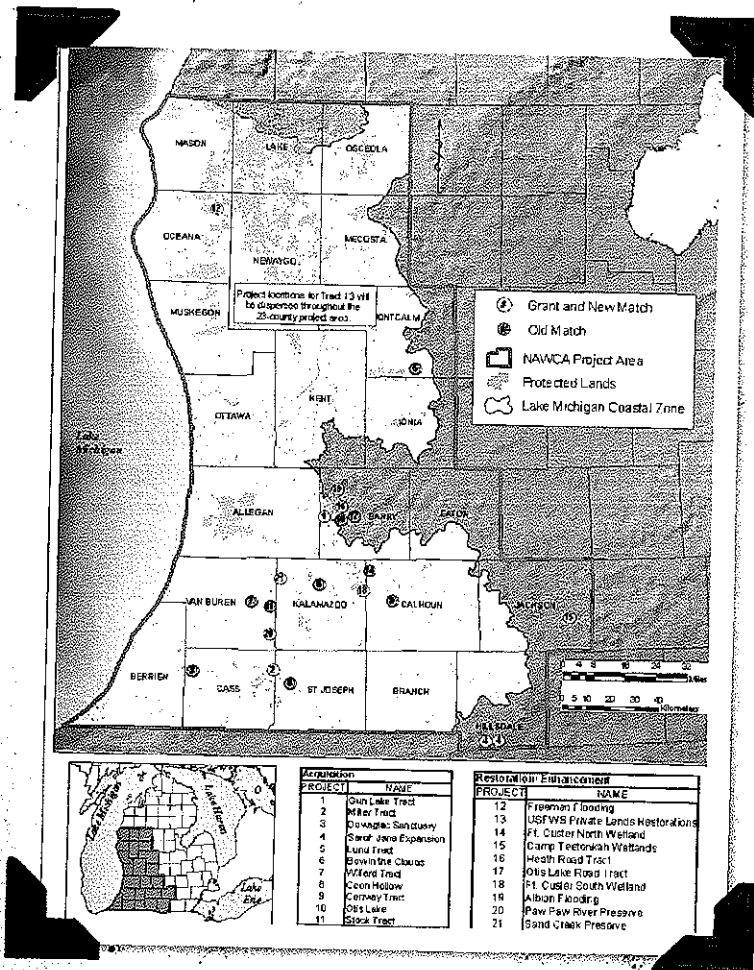
In November 2009, Ducks Unlimited (DU) was awarded a \$989,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to protect, restore and enhance wetland and associated upland habitat throughout DU's Southeast Lake Michigan Watershed priority area. This proposal, submitted in March 2009 by DU on behalf of a large coalition of partners, will result in the conservation of more than 2,000 acres of waterfowl habitat throughout a 23-county area of southwest Michigan and within the coastal zone of Lake Michigan.

DU and its conservation partners, including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service, Michigan Nature Association, Potawatomi RC&D, Boy Scouts of America, R.T. Groos LLC and Ft. Custer Training Center, collectively committed \$2.1 million in matching and non-matching funds to secure the federal grant. The partners' efforts in the project area will protect and restore wetland habitat in a region where tens of thousands of acres of emergent, forested and scrub-shrub wetlands historically existed. The majority of these wetlands have been drained by surface ditches, sub-surface field tile, or other hydrological modifications for agricultural and other purposes.

Key projects planned under this grant include a 279-acre wetland acquisition adjacent to Gun Lake, a 200-acre wetland restoration in the Manistee National Forest, and a 175-acre wetland enhancement at the Ft. Custer Training Center. Many other conservation projects will be conducted on both public and private lands throughout the project area, including several that will be designed and implemented by DU's engineering staff. DU and its conservation partners plan to complete these projects over the next three years.

The eight standard NAWCA grants which DU has been awarded in Michigan have secured approximately \$7.7 million of federal funds and \$21.3 million of partner matching funds to conserve more than 27,000 acres of waterfowl habitat across the state.

*DU and partners will conserve more than 2,000 acres of waterfowl habitat in a 23-county area of southwest Michigan.*



## BIG MARSH LAKE ENHANCEMENT

**Ducks Unlimited (DU)** and partners recently completed the 200-acre Big Marsh Lake project in Calhoun County. Big Marsh Lake is owned jointly by the Michigan Audubon Society (MAS) and Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek (KCBC) and has historically been an important breeding and migratory stopover site for tens of thousands of ducks, geese and sandhill cranes. However, over time the productivity of the wetland had declined significantly due to the failure of the water level management infrastructure that had been installed decades ago.

As a result, use by waterfowl and other wetland wildlife had been steadily declining.

DU partnered with MAS, KCBC, Calhoun Conservation District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment to provide the matching funds needed to secure a \$39,000 North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) small grant to implement this project. DU's engineering staff completed the topographic survey, design, bidding, contracting and construction management services that resulted in the installation of a new water control structure that will allow wetland managers to emulate natural hydrologic processes needed to sustain quality habitat. An important improvement in the design of the new water control structure was to re-establish a connection between Big Marsh Lake and Ackley Creek that will allow fish and other aquatic organisms to pass into and out of the wetland.



*DU and partners enhanced 200 acres of wetlands at Big Marsh Lake, and re-established passage into the wetland for fish and other aquatic organisms.*

## BRANCHEAU COASTAL WETLAND RESTORATION



**Ducks Unlimited (DU)** partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Waterfowl USA, the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, Michigan Duck Hunters Association, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, DTE, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to restore 67 acres of critical coastal wetland habitat along western Lake Erie in Monroe County. The Brancheau property previously was in agricultural production but was restored to coastal wetlands in two adjacent units (45 acres and 22 acres) that will be managed by the USFWS as part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. DU staff provided the topographic survey, engineering design, bidding, contracting and construction management services for this showcase project. In 2010 DU and the USFWS intend to co-host a dedication of this impressive project.

*The USFWS will use this pump and associated water control structures designed by DU to emulate natural hydrology at the Brancheau wetlands.*

## DU RESTORES 135 ACRES OF COASTAL WETLANDS ALONG WIGWAM BAY

In 2009 Ducks Unlimited (DU) partnered with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, Dow Chemical Company, Bay Area Community Foundation and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to restore hydrology to 135 acres of highly degraded coastal wetlands at Wigwam Bay State Wildlife Area in Arenac County. DU's staff of biologists and engineers completed the topographic survey, design, permitting, bidding, contracting and construction management services for this project that plugged several drainage ditches and installed a water control structure and emergency spillways to effectively restore wetland hydrology. The hydrological restoration of this coastal wetland is a significant conservation achievement that will provide quality habitat for breeding and migrating waterfowl, shore and wading birds, and other wetland dependent wildlife. Additionally, Saginaw Bay water quality will be improved through the restored hydrology that will once again allow the wetland to retain runoff and filter nutrients, sediments, and toxins before they reach Saginaw Bay.

## DU SECURES FIRST MICHIGAN CONSERVATION EASEMENT

In September of 2009, DU finalized the details of our first-ever conservation easement in Michigan. The permanent conservation easement donated to DU by a private landowner protects a pristine 5.38-acre property on North Island in Saginaw Bay's Wildfowl Bay. The property is located on the easterly portion of the island, has frontage on both the north and south shores of Wildfowl Bay, and includes a mix of coastal wetlands and upland northern hardwood forest. DU intends to leverage the \$162,000 value of the donated easement to secure additional state or federal funding to support our conservation programs along Saginaw Bay.



*A permanent conservation easement donated to DU permanently protects this 5.38-acre parcel of coastal wetlands on North Island.*

## DUCKS UNLIMITED SPREADS ITS WINGS

Diversity is the key to success, and in that vein Ducks Unlimited (DU) strives to expand our involvement in conservation-related activities. In 2009, DU was heavily involved in three events that targeted outdoor journalists, Michigan legislators, and the general public all in ways intimately related to our mission of wetland conservation.

In February, DU hosted a **Legislative Reception** at the state capital in Lansing with a goal of informing state legislators and their staff about DU, the importance of wetland conservation, clean water, and how they can support federal programs that fund wetland conservation. The event was a huge success with 19 of 38 senators and 56 of 110 house members attending personally. Many more were represented by a member of their staff and we had 138 attendees overall. The Michigan Lt. Governor and the Senate Majority Leader both addressed the audience along with the Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Multiple DU staff, conservation partners, major donors and volunteers attended the event, and helped to make it a huge success.

In June, DU hosted a **Wetland Dinner** in Grand Rapids that was attended by numerous outdoor journalists that were attending the annual conference of the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA). This event featured multiple DU staff, conservation partners, major donors and volunteers who combined their unique perspectives to inform outdoor writers about DU and the importance of wetland conservation.

DU partnered with Michigan State University and the Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Region Joint Venture to produce an informative **PBS-style DVD** on wetlands restoration in the Great Lakes and the many benefits wetlands provide to private landowners and society in general. This video features interviews by DU biologists, partners and volunteers speaking to the importance of wetland conservation at multiple wetland sites. In addition to the distribution of nearly 450 copies, the DVD has been played on public television stations across Michigan and Ohio.

## CLARK'S MARSH PRIDE DEDICATION

On September 12, 2009, the dedication of the Clark's Marsh wetland complex took place within the Huron-Manistee National Forest in Oscoda County to commemorate the partnership between Ducks Unlimited (DU), the U.S. Forest Service and Michigan Wildlife Conservancy that led to the completion of this 65-acre wetland restoration. Forty-one DU major sponsors and foundation supporters that have contributed through the PRIDE program (see page 4 for more details) were recognized on a bronze plaque that was unveiled at the dedication. In attendance were more than 75 DU staff, volunteers, major donors and conservation partners.

*Conservationists gather around the bronze plaque that recognizes them as DU major donors at the September 2009 Clark's Marsh PRIDE dedication.*



## LOST LAKE ACQUISITION

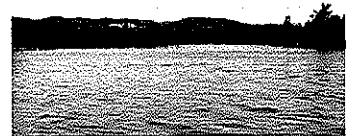
**Ducks Unlimited (DU)** partnered for the first time with the **Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM)** to acquire and permanently protect 35 acres of the Lost Lake property in Muskegon County. This wetland property is located behind a wooded dune along Lake Michigan and provides unique spring migration and breeding habitat for waterfowl. The property was subsequently transferred by LCWM to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment for inclusion into Muskegon State Park. DU continues to explore additional partnership opportunities with LCWM as we expand our Southeast Lake Michigan Watershed program into the Muskegon River watershed.

## DU CONTINUES SUPPORT OF CONSERVATION ON PRIVATE LAND

**Ducks Unlimited (DU)** has been supporting the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS)** Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFW) in Michigan for more than a decade. Through the PFW, the USFWS restores and enhances wetlands and establishes native prairie on private land, effectively providing quality production and spring migration habitat for waterfowl. In 2009, the USFWS used 70 gallons of Round-Up Pro® herbicide donated by DU through our partnership with CropLife America to establish 120 acres of native warm season grass in DU's Southeast Lake Michigan Watershed priority area. In addition, DU has committed \$70,000 of funding to the USFWS-PFW over the next 3 years to help restore over 800 acres of wetlands and grasslands in all three of DU's Michigan priority areas. DU also has helped the USFWS secure an additional \$180,000 of federal funding for the PFW program through the two most recent NAWCA grants that DU has received in Michigan.

## DU HELPS EXPAND THE GRASS RIVER NATURAL AREA

The **Grass River Natural Area** is a nature preserve located in Antrim County's Chain of Lakes in northwest lower Michigan. Antrim County received state funding and partnered with DU and the Grass River Natural Area Inc. to acquire and permanently protect 177 acres of habitat and 1.4 miles of shoreline for inclusion into the Grass River Natural Area. This acquisition consisted of 6 parcels, including the former North Shore Hunt Club, all adjacent to Lake Bellaire or the Grass River which serve as high-quality recreational waters. Public ownership will ensure the wooded and swampy shorelines remain in their natural state, expand public recreational opportunities, and protect important waterfowl migration and feeding areas.



*DU provided cost-share assistance to protect 1.4 miles of shoreline along Lake Bellaire and the Grass River in Antrim County.*

## SAGINAW BAY TO LAKE ERIE COASTAL HABITAT PHASE II NAWCA GRANT

In January, 2009 **Ducks Unlimited (DU)** completed the first year of a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant that focuses on the conservation of waterfowl habitat in the coastal zone of Saginaw Bay, Lake St. Clair and western Lake Erie. The \$1,000,000 grant was awarded to DU in September 2008 on behalf of a partnership of 17 conservation organizations. DU and these partners together pledged \$2.4 in matching funds to obtain the grant, which will result in the conservation of more than 4,700 acres of wetlands and associated upland habitats on public and private land.

Key accomplishments to date include the permanent protection of 118 acres of floodplain wetland habitat in two separate transactions for inclusion into Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. The Conservation Fund donated the 40-acre **Chamberlain I** property to the refuge which was contingent on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and DU first acquiring the adjacent 78-acre **Chamberlain II** property. In addition, DU and the USFWS acquired the 35-acre **Burke** property for inclusion into the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. In addition to these important acquisition projects, DU is involved in two large-scale wetland engineering projects at Fish Point Wildlife Area and at Somerset State Game Area that collectively will enhance more than 2,300 acres of waterfowl migration and breeding habitat. These projects are expected to be complete by the fall of 2010.

## MICHIGAN PRIDE

**Michigan PRIDE (Putting Resources Into Ducks Everywhere)** is a major gift campaign to secure DU major sponsors in support of habitat conservation and our waterfowling heritage in the United States, Canada and Mexico, with special emphasis on conservation in Michigan. PRIDE offers supporters the option of directing their gift toward the statewide Michigan conservation program, a specific Michigan priority area, or other continental DU priorities. PRIDE donors that restrict their support to conservation in Michigan are recognized on a DU project in the state. DU's conservation staff leverages PRIDE dollars against other funding sources, effectively turning each PRIDE dollar into four or more for conservation in Michigan!

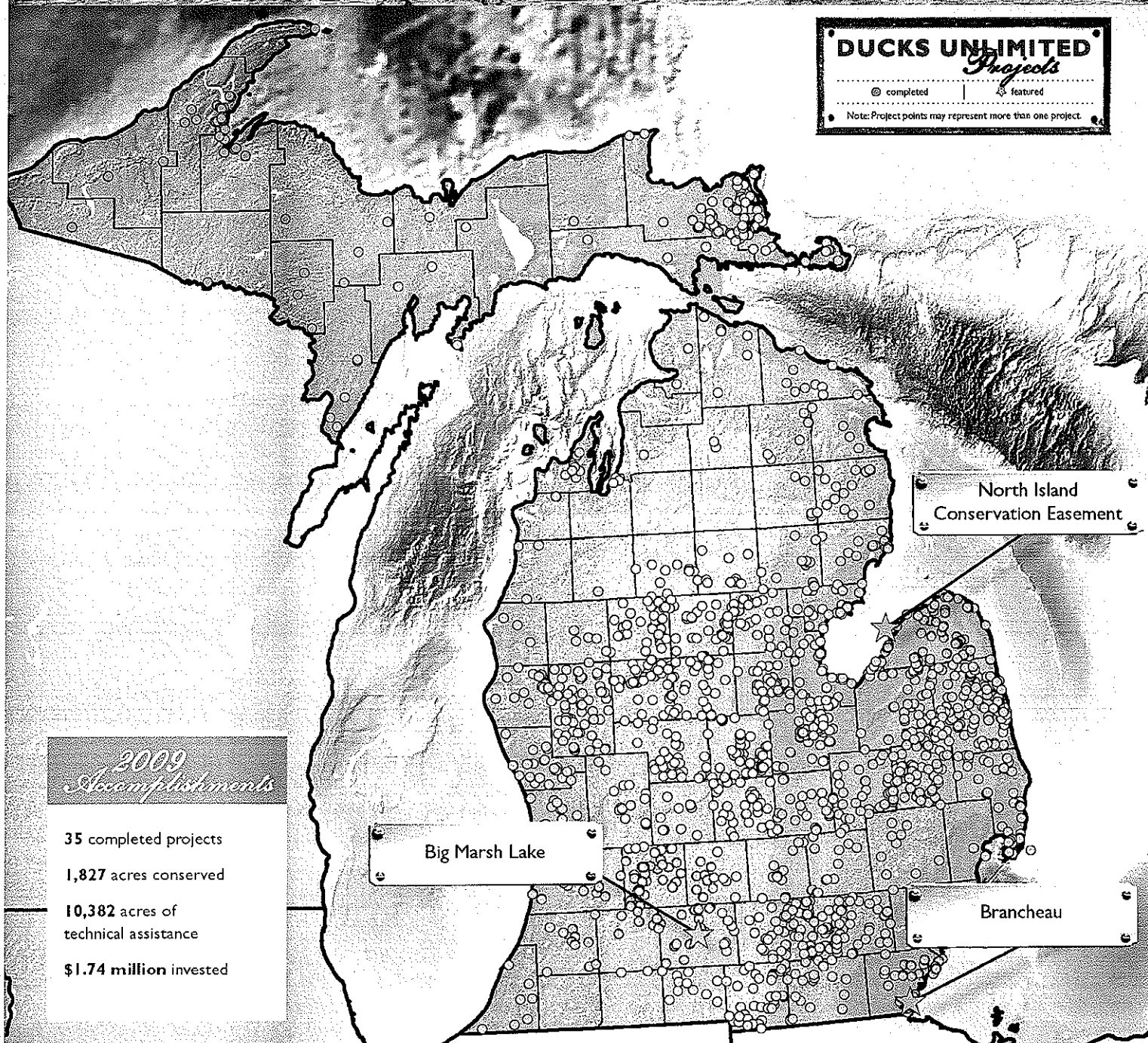
# CONSERVATION SUMMARY

## DUCKS UNLIMITED *Projects*

● completed

★ featured

Note: Project points may represent more than one project.



### 2009 *Accomplishments*

35 completed projects

1,827 acres conserved

10,382 acres of  
technical assistance

\$1.74 million invested

## MEET YOUR MICHIGAN CONSERVATION STAFF



Michael Sertle is responsible for DU's conservation programs in the Southeast Lake Michigan Watershed priority area and in Indiana.

### Contact Information:

Michael Sertle, Regional Biologist,  
[msertle@ducks.org](mailto:msertle@ducks.org) 734-623-2000



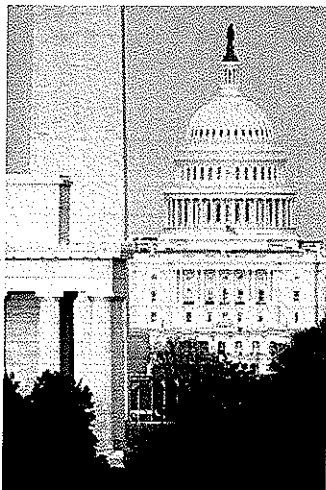
Casey Bartkus is responsible for DU's conservation programs in the Saginaw Bay and Lake Erie Watershed priority areas, the Upper Peninsula and the northern Lower Peninsula.

### Contact Information:

Casey Bartkus Regional Biologist,  
[cbartkus@ducks.org](mailto:cbartkus@ducks.org) 734-623-2000



## DU WORKS FOR WATERFOWL THROUGH PUBLIC POLICY



A strong biological foundation has always been the cornerstone of Ducks Unlimited's conservation programs since the organization's founding in 1937. DU remains true to this foundation as it works to guide development of national policies that benefit waterfowl.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act and legislation involving clean water, climate and energy are among the current priorities for the DU staff in D.C.

The Farm Bill, although not set for renewal until 2012,

also remains on DU's radar because Farm Bill programs like Conservation Reserve Program and Wetlands Reserve Program have significant implications for waterfowl habitats.

The Clean Water Restoration Act passed the Senate Environment and Public Works committee in 2009. This was a positive move toward reinstating protections for wetlands important to breeding ducks and small streams connected to many of the nation's drinking water resources. Progress on clean water legislation stalled in the House, but DU remains poised to work with House leadership to ensure waterfowl interests are considered in future bills.

At the end of 2009, a bill to enhance the power of NAWCA unanimously passed the House and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. It then went to the Senate floor for a vote and it was signed by the president in March 2010. The bill will allow increased investment from Canadian resources to fulfill the requirement for private funds to match the federal contribution.

To receive DU's latest policy news go to [WWW.DUCKS.ORG/CIB](http://WWW.DUCKS.ORG/CIB) and subscribe to the Conservation Issues Briefing.

## Wetlands for Tomorrow

### North America's Vanishing Wetlands: Facing the Challenge

Poets write about it. Conservationists strive to continue it. Sportsmen dream about it. The migration of North America's waterfowl and other birds is one of nature's grandest and most anticipated events.

Wetlands make this migration possible. Wetlands also provide the foundation for North America's water supply. We rely on them for clean and abundant water, flood protection and recreation. Wetlands are vital to us all, yet every 10 minutes another acre of wetlands is drained.

### Ducks Unlimited: Answering the Challenge

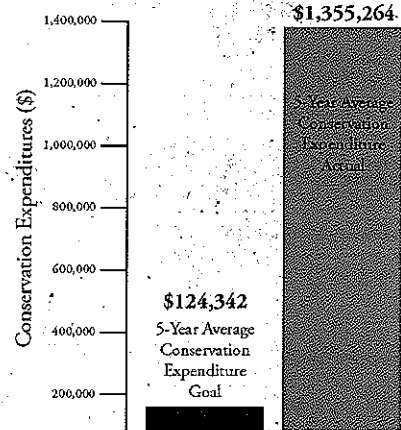
To answer the challenge to save North America's wetlands, grasslands and waterfowl, Ducks Unlimited has embarked on the *Wetlands for Tomorrow* campaign, an ambitious continental effort to raise at least \$1.7 billion for wetland habitat conservation.

With a proven track record of partnering with the private sector, government and other conservation organizations for nearly 70 years, Ducks Unlimited has restored and conserved over 12 million acres of crucial habitat that benefits waterfowl, other wildlife and people.

Please join us to learn more about *Wetlands for Tomorrow* and the initiatives to conserve North America's critical wetlands.

### DU MICHIGAN GRASSROOTS & CONSERVATION: 2004 - 2008

The minimum conservation goal for each state is to spend the equivalent of 7.5% of total grassroots income raised in that state. This is based on a five-year average.



### Campaign Progress 1/1/04 - 11/30/09



## IS THE RECOVERY SUSTAINABLE?

**Jim Ringelman**, *Director of Conservation Programs at the Great Plains Regional Office*

No, not that recovery. The other recovery. The duck recovery.

A record setting snowfall across much of the U.S. prairie, coupled with an abnormally wet summer, filled wetlands to the brim. It seemed like every pothole was home to one or more breeding duck pairs. Let the good times roll.

But will they roll on forever? Ominously, we are still poised to lose 1.66 million acres of grassland in the Prairie Pothole Region when Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts expire in 2012, and those potholes that attracted ducks were a real irritant to farmers attempting to plant or harvest their crops. It's ironic that the most favorable conditions for ducks can lead to a backlash against the very resources that create duck prosperity.

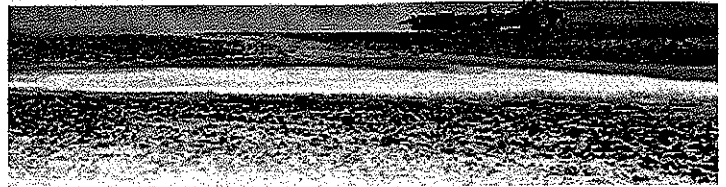
The great news is that we are making real progress. Since our Rescue the Duck Factory campaign began, DU members have contributed \$3.6 million to secure 68,000 acres of grasslands and wetlands. That's a remarkable achievement.

As farmers are pinched with smaller profit margins, one response is to put new land into production – often at the expense of native prairie or CRP. At DU, we are working hard to offer alternative financial solutions, like easements and farm bill conservation programs. And thanks to a new partnership with Bayer CropScience, when land is destined to grow crops, we are well positioned to promote winter wheat as a duck-friendly alternative.

So is the recovery sustainable? The answer is "yes," as long as we have members like you!



## HELP RESCUE THE DUCK FACTORY



**North America's most important waterfowl breeding habitat** is being plowed under on a massive scale. Surging global demands for food, federal mandates for corn-based ethanol production and the new Farm Bill are encouraging cultivation of every available acre.

### Act Now To Help DU Save Vital Prairie Breeding Habitats

The "Rescue the Duck Factory" campaign has become a priority for Ducks Unlimited because of new pressures on landowners within the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR). The funds raised through this campaign will be directed toward perpetual land easements on native grasslands in the PPR, also known as the "duck factory."

### The Opportunity is Now

But we are making a difference thanks to supporters like you. So far, we've rescued over 67,000 acres, but more help is needed. At an average per acre cost of \$360, your contribution to this campaign will allow DU to purchase easements in the Prairie Pothole Region that will permanently protect this vital habitat for future generations.

### The Goal

Our vision is wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. With your contribution we can continue to work toward that goal.

This prairie acreage is vital to North American waterfowl production and it's crucial that we act now.

The decisions we make in the duck factory right now will directly affect waterfowl populations and our waterfowl hunting heritage for future generations.

[www.ducks.org/support/rescueduckfactory](http://www.ducks.org/support/rescueduckfactory)

# FRIENDS OF DUCKS UNLIMITED

## FREY FOUNDATION

Based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Frey Foundation has been supporting Ducks Unlimited's (DU) conservation programs in southwest Michigan since 2004. The Frey Foundation awarded DU an initial grant of \$100,000 in 2004 to support wetland conservation in the Grand River watershed. This first grant was instrumental in providing some of the required non-federal match to the \$1,000,000 Grand River Watershed Project NAWCA grant that was awarded to DU and resulted in the conservation of 2,403 acres of wetland and upland habitat. In March 2009, the Frey Foundation awarded DU a second grant, this one in the amount of \$160,000, to support our conservation programs in the Muskegon, Grand and Kalamazoo River watersheds. This most recent grant from the Frey Foundation helped DU secure a \$989,000 NAWCA grant (see cover page) by providing a portion of the non-federal match.



*Frey Foundation President, Milt Rohwer, and Program Officer, Kristine Huizen, receive the Benefactor plaque for their support of DU's conservation programs in the Grand River watershed.*

## THE ELIZABETH, ALLAN, & WARREN SHELLEN FOUNDATION



Based in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, the Elizabeth, Allan, & Warren Shelden Foundation has been supporting Ducks Unlimited's (DU) conservation programs in the Lake St. Clair and western Lake Erie watersheds since 2007. In 2009, the Shelden Fund continued four consecutive years of supporting DU by awarding a grant in the amount of \$20,000, bringing the four-year total to \$95,000! DU has used Shelden Foundation funding to conserve more than 2,000 acres of wetland and associated upland habitat, including notable projects such as the Brancheau coastal wetland restorations (Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge), McKinley acquisition (Erie State Game Area), phragmites control in coastal wetlands, and wetland restorations on privately owned land.

*Bill Shelden, President of the Elizabeth, Allan & Warren Shelden Fund, receives the Heritage plaque from DU's Todd Bishop.*

## MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR: TERRY LAYMON

At Ducks Unlimited's (DU) 2009 state convention in Midland, Terry "Gooseman" Laymon was honored as the fourth Michigan DU Volunteer Conservationist of the Year (VCY). Each year this award is presented by the Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office to recognize and show appreciation for exceptional conservation and program-specific fund-raising efforts on the part of a Michigan DU volunteer.

Terry Laymon has been an active volunteer in DU's southeast Michigan region for over 20 years and along the way has helped to create 12 new chapters and recruit more than 100 new volunteers. Terry currently holds the positions of Major Donor Chairman and State Treasurer for Michigan, and previously has served in many other volunteer capacities, including executive coordinator and district, zone and area chairman. Terry is a DU major donor and is currently pledged at the Diamond Sponsor in Perpetuity level. Over the past 5 years, Terry has led the way in securing more than 75 new major donors, the vast majority of which have restricted their contributions for use in Michigan in support of our local conservation programs. For all of these reasons and many more, Terry Laymon is much deserving of the VCY award!



*Former Michigan regional biologist, Paul Hess, awarding the 2009 Michigan Volunteer Conservationist of the Year award to Terry 'Gooseman' Laymon.*

**Ducks Unlimited** conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people.



**DUCKS UNLIMITED**

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**DUCKS UNLIMITED TESTIMONY**  
**Senate Bill 187 – Ducks Unlimited Specialty License Plate**

Greetings Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Russ Terry. I manage Ducks Unlimited's conservation programs in the Great Lakes states, and I work out of our regional office in Ann Arbor. I appear before you today in a few capacities to support a DU specialty license plate. First, I am representing DU as staff of the organization and also as a volunteer of the Michigan chapter of Ducks Unlimited, which has more than 30,000 members. More importantly I appear before you as a life-long resident of Michigan; one who is proud of the natural resource heritage of our state but who is concerned about the fate of our natural resources and particularly how to fund future natural resource conservation opportunities.

Passage of a DU specialty license plate will play a significant role in the future of wetlands and related habitats in Michigan; a future that is important not only for all current residents, including my two beautiful young daughters who love to swim and go fishing, but also to the people that will come after us.

Wetlands are much more than places for ducks and geese. We know that wetlands are important to more than 900 species of plants and animals, many of which are threatened or endangered. The presence of wetlands and the plants and animals that depend upon them are important to society not only from a recreational and economic perspective, but also from a more basic fundamental enrichment of our lives. Wetlands enhance our quality of life! Pure Michigan!

Wetlands are also important to us for other reasons related to our health and welfare. They act as nature's ground water filtration system. They serve an important role as nature's sponge, helping to soak up waters and reduce the effects of flooding. They also clean surface water, and have the capacity to make huge improvements to water quality in inland lakes, rivers and ultimately the Great Lakes. Fourteen other states thought the DU license plate was a good idea, and have passed similar legislation, *including the Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania.*

Passage of a Ducks Unlimited license plate will do great things for Michigan, especially during these trying economic times. Approximately 50 percent of our wetlands in Michigan have been lost, with some regions, such as Saginaw Bay and Lake Erie having lost more than 80 percent. The federal government and the Great Lakes states are implementing a plan to restore the Great Lakes – but that is going to take a significant amount of funding. A DU license plate holds the promise of providing additional funds to help restore and protect wetland habitat because DU will restrict all of the revenue from the sale of the license plate for use on wetland conservation in Michigan.

DU has a track record of matching our funding at least 4 to 1. All funding we receive from the sale of DU license plates can be leveraged with federal, state and private grants, as well as dollars from corporations and foundations, to drastically increase the pot of funding available for Michigan habitat conservation. This funding will be used to protect and restore wetlands, and in doing so, employ not only DU staff in the state, but also contractors and other businesses that help us do our work – so it will help to stimulate the economy.

Ducks Unlimited is the largest private, non-profit wetlands conservation organization in the world, having been involved in the conservation of more than 12 million acres of habitat across North America. Our Regional Office in Ann Arbor employs 43 people that work in an 18 state area conserving wetlands through voluntary, incentive-based programs. Right here in Michigan, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 66,000 acres of habitat, consisting of more than 1,400 projects, with an investment of over \$20 million dollars.

Wetlands conservation is expensive. On average, it costs approximately \$1,000 for each acre of habitat restored. That is why a DU specialty plate holds such promise. Currently, there are more than 30,000 Ducks Unlimited members in Michigan. Ducks Unlimited members are passionate about conserving wetlands and that passion translates into generosity with their donations to Ducks Unlimited to further the interests of habitat conservation. Therefore, the potential exists for significant revenue to be generated by the participation of Ducks Unlimited members alone in the registration opportunities that a specialty plate will create if it becomes law. We are confident that the DU license plate will appeal to non-DU members as well.

We anticipate selling a minimum of 10,000 license plates, which will generate \$250,000. Given the fact that Ducks Unlimited typically leverages each dollar 4 times, the net affect will be an expected \$1 million dollars or more for wetland conservation just from the sale of the plate. DU also will receive \$10 for each DU license plate renewal and will turn each renewal into at least another \$50 for Michigan habitat conservation. In essence, this bill will generate far reaching conservation benefits for all of Michigan's residents, both humans and wildlife.

In summary, Mister Chairman and members of the committee, a DU specialty plate presents residents of Michigan the unique opportunity of supporting wetlands conservation while doing something that they have to do anyway if they own a vehicle – annually registering it. This bill will provide a *voluntary* mechanism for Michigan residents to show their *support* for the habitat conservation efforts of Ducks Unlimited, while also providing an *economic stimulus* by creating jobs and providing employment when we conduct our wetland restoration projects. Sounds like Pure Michigan to me! Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions that you may have.



# MICHIGAN DUCKS UNLIMITED SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE

## A WIN-WIN PROPOSITION WITH THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- ECONOMIC STIMULUS AND MORE JOBS IN MICHIGAN
- A CLEANER, HEALTHIER MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENT
- MORE AND BETTER WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT
- INCREASED RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR MICHIGAN RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS

Specialty license plates can raise significant funds for an organization that can be used to leverage and match additional federal and state dollars, such as those available in the proposed Great Lakes Initiative. A bill has been introduced in the Michigan Senate (SB 187-Booher) and in the House (HB4354-Potvin). This legislation would create a specialty license plate for Ducks Unlimited, Inc., a non-profit wetland habitat conservation organization, to generate funds for wetland habitat conservation in Michigan.

**1. Michigan Ducks Unlimited (DU)** - There are approximately 30,000 DU members in Michigan, distributed in every county, and who are coordinated in 135 committees that host 192 fundraising events annually. DU members in Michigan are passionately committed to wetland conservation, and own many vehicles, boats, trailers, campers and RVs. Our goal is to aggressively market the plate in many venues and sell at least 10,000 plates by the 3rd year, generating \$150,000 for wetland conservation in Michigan.



**2. Contribution to Michigan's Economy** - In 2006 alone, Michigan residents spent a total of over \$843 million on hunting expenditures (an average of \$1,170 per hunter); Migratory bird hunters in Michigan (~ 48,000) spent approximately \$1.3 million. Wildlife watching participants spent over \$1.5 billion in Michigan (an average of \$522 per participant). Wetlands provide key places for hunters, fisherman and wildlife watchers to engage in their activities. DU hires local contractors to conduct restoration projects, creating local jobs and stimulating the economy.

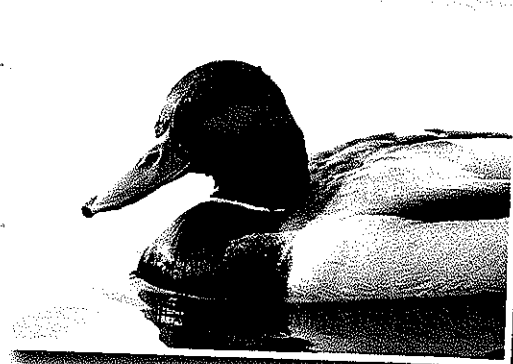


**3. Michigan Habitat Accomplishments** - DU's regional office in Ann Arbor employs 35 biologists, engineers, surveyors, technicians and support staff, has completed more than 1,536 projects in Michigan. Since 1985, projects completed by DU and its partners have conserved more than 65,000 acres of wetlands and adjacent uplands, investing approximately \$24.8 million. Our plans are to continue to grow, especially with the new Michigan Great Lakes Restoration Plan and availability of new federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds.



**4. Partnerships and Dollar Leveraging** - DU works with a wide array of partners in Michigan, including the MI DNR, MI Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, other conservation organizations, and private landowners and agricultural producers. These partnerships, in conjunction with DU's work with private foundations and corporate sponsors, allows Ducks Unlimited *to leverage every DU dollar at least four times* for the cause of wetland conservation, including revenue generated from the sale of DU license plates - maximizing the returns for our Great Lakes state!

**5. Accountability** - DU also has an extensive accounting system to track the numerous state, federal and private dollars we receive and would track the DU Michigan license plate revenue as a separate account. Ducks Unlimited has its books audited annually by an outside independent auditor. Throughout our entire 74-year history, external auditors have issued a clean opinion on our financial records. Furthermore, our public income is audited under the Federal A-133 guidelines to ensure that the revenues and expenses generated at DU are appropriate and within the terms of our various agreements with our federal partners.



**6. Other State DU License Plate Experiences** - To date, 17 other states have passed DU license plate legislation, including all states surrounding Michigan. Readily available data from Ohio (16,500 members), where they have sold 5,449 plates, has generated approximately \$82,000 in income.

**THE MISSION OF DUCKS UNLIMITED IS TO CONSERVE, RESTORE  
AND MANAGE WETLANDS AND ASSOCIATED UPLANDS FOR NORTH AMERICAN  
WATERFOWL, OTHER WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE.**



**GREAT LAKES &  
ATLANTIC REGION**

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